

Spring Newsletter

Serving Troubled Youth Since 1981

Turning Sixty-Five

Now that I am officially old and have seen the faithfulness of God for decades, I enjoy the ministry even more. Why worry when the Lord has worked out so many issues and challenges in the past?

It feels like this is the season to enjoy the favor of God and the peace that comes with years of experience.

However, my age may have something to do with me becoming less patient with rebellious youth even though I said it would never happen. The enemy can even use their immaturity at times to frustrate me.

I thought incarcerated youth were the only ones getting harder to deal with but learned that most all young people are impulsive, inappropriate, and even violent these days.

Fortunately, this newsletter contains stories and artwork of three youth who have been a blessing to work with!

Rick Johnson

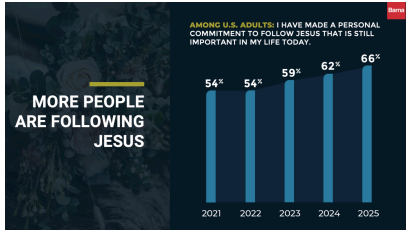


An Easter Outreach had been held at the Youth Guidance Center and the Joplin Youth Center for many years but never at Juvenile Hall. They stopped after the pandemic and one of my goals this year was to restart them. The first step was to get the Catholic Ministry to partner with me so all the youth in Juvenile Hall and the Youth Guidance Center could attend. They graciously agreed and we planned to use the Easter Play I had created and a short video clip.

Proposal memos were approved for outreaches and then I created posters to place in each of the units. Improvements were made to the scripts everyone would receive and to the slides projected during the play. Twelve guests were recruited and several of my volunteers also agreed to serve. As I planned for the outreaches, I began to remember how much I had looked forward to having them.

A week prior to the outreach, I walked throughout Juvenile Hall and as I spoke to the staff, I saw how supportive they were. When I added up the potential number of youth who were eligible to attend, it was twice what I expected. A Christian staff member asked to work on her day off and was assigned to make sure everything went smoothly. The unit that brought the most youth was a unit that normally sends very few youth to church.

The staff at YGC also totally supported the outreach there and worked things out so everyone at the facility attended. Youth at both places were eager to read the parts in the play and did a pretty good job. Seventy-five youth learned the real reason for Easter and were told how faith in Jesus can change their lives.



Someone Was Watching

On February 21st, I got arrested while thinking I would never get caught. It all started when I began losing my love for football and wanted something to fill the void. So I did new things, hung around new people, which lead to showing off and doing things I knew weren't right. One day I went too far and landed in Juvenile Hall.

When I called my mom, she was crying and asking how could this have happened? She then prayed and asked the Lord to watch over me. Once I got back into my room, I felt my body getting hot and like someone was watching me.

One morning I woke up to a knock on my door asking about going to church. I eagerly went and at the end of our service I was given a paper with the sinner's prayer on it. Bob said, "Pray this if you are ready to give your life to the Lord." I went back to my room and felt someone watching over me again.

Later, I got to call my mom and asked her to put my dad and girlfriend on the line. I started to pray the sinners prayer so they could hear me. Everyone was crying as the prayer ended with an amen. When I got back to my room, I heard, "You did it!" and felt a weight lift off my body. February 23rd was the day I met the Lord and I never want to go back to my old ways.

Malachi - Youth Guidance Center

My Life is in God's Hand

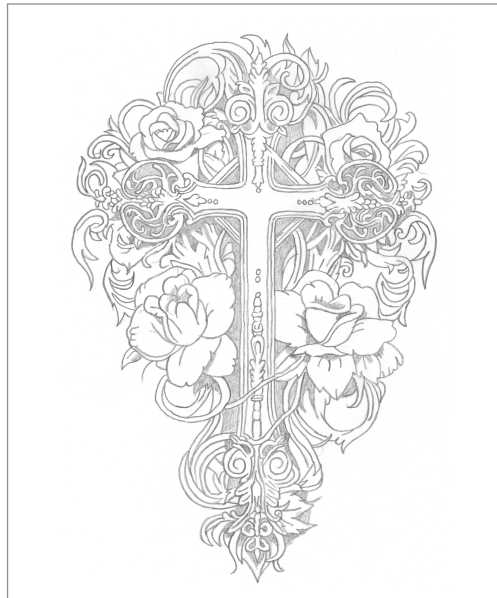
It was a normal Monday in Unit H and after finishing dinner clean up, I hopped on the phone to talk to my mom. I heard something about my brother that got me angry and stressed out because I couldn't do anything to help her. The phone call lasted ten minutes and then I took it down to my room. Once the door closed, I began to judge my brother's behavior thinking, "Why would he do that to my mom and put her through more pain?"

When 6:30 pm came around, I was popped out for bible study and walked down the hall thinking I shouldn't attend because I was still upset. But then I sat down with the other guys and waited to feel better. When Moses shook my hand, he noticed something was bothering me and I said, "I have a lot on my mind." His lesson began from Matthew 7:1-5 about not judging others. I was in shock realizing it was exactly what I needed to hear. I wondered if someone told Moses what just happened!

Later that night alone in my room, I began to think about the situation. Jesus had said, "How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take out the speck in your eye when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?'" Then it hit me that God was

speaking directly to me. How could I judge my brother for what he was doing when I had done the very same thing? That night I learned that I need to help myself before I can help my brother.

This was the first time in a long time I realized that my life is in God's hand and he really is watching over me.



Fernando - Juvenile Hall

Ryan - Juvenile Hall

PYCM #003
PO Box 8875
Redlands, CA 92375

chaplainrj@sbcglobal.net
(714) 721-6688
rick.pacificyouth.org